



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

BUREAU OF BIOLOGICAL SURVEY

For Release FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 1940

NEW BULLETIN ON "ATTRACTING BIRDS" IS NO. 1 IN INTERIOR CONSERVATION SERIES

Making available to the public a new series of leaflets, Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes today announced the publication of Conservation Bulletin No. 1, a contribution from the Bureau of Biological Survey entitled "Attracting Birds." The series has been established to aid interested persons to encourage a prudent use of the country's natural resources.

By carefully supplying the proper types of food and homes, one can almost select the kinds of birds that will live in the neighborhood, W. L. McAtee, technical advisor of the Biological Survey, states in the new bulletin. Hummingbirds, for instance, may be catered to by supplying sirup in small bottles or drinking fountains. Larger birds will avail themselves of houses with openings of suitable sizes. Landscaping and water supplies are other attractions.

Anyone who wishes to enjoy having birds in his neighborhood, however, has certain responsibilities, the author points out. A prime requisite is protection, he says, and he suggests fences, tree guards, and other devices as means of safeguarding the birds against marauders.

Mr. McAtee also points out that, although formerly there seemed to be no end to the desirability of attracting birds, certain limitations have recently been recognized. Some of these pertain to the welfare of the birds themselves; others, to man's interests.

Before encouraging large numbers of birds in a neighborhood it is well, he writes, to give careful attention to possibilities of damage by the birds. Encouraging local overpopulations of birds may have results directly injurious to man's interests in that the increased demand for food may cause the birds to resort to the products of the garden, field, or orchard.

Attracting numbers of birds continually to the same spot, Mr. McAtee also explains, may produce a hazard of disease transmission among the birds. He suggests various devices for avoiding the contamination of food.

Feeding waterfowl, for example, is considered hazardous because it brings together heavily parasitized and healthy birds. In fall it may also induce the migratory birds to remain in more northern areas until freezing weather renders natural food supplies unavailable. "It would seem best, therefore," says Mr. McAtee, "to avoid feeding waterfowl except during emergencies."

Despite all cautions, however, Mr. McAtee contends that the presence of the feathered creatures has economic advantages as well as interest and beauty. "Premises with a large bird population certainly will be freer from insects and weeds than a comparatively birdless area," he declares.

Illustrated by 12 pen and ink drawings, Conservation Bulletin No. 1 treats in detail each phase of the problem of attracting birds.